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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
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FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3820
INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0062
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY 0009
RUEHSK/AMEMBASSY MINSK PRIORITY 0002
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY 0002
RUEHGVA/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0088
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000149

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/RHS, DRL/MLGA, EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2017

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [BX](#)

SUBJECT: BRUNEI MAY HAVE FLEXIBILITY TO DROP SUPPORT FOR
BELARUS UNHRC CANDIDACY AFTER FIRST ROUND

REF: A. SECSTATE 58056

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 63345

[1](#)C. BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 141

Classified By: DCM Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) As discussed Ref C, Brunei is still likely to support Belarus in at least the first round of UNHRC voting. At this late stage, drawing on Ref C paragraph 3 points, USUN may still be able to help move Brunei to abstain on Belarus in subsequent rounds now that we understand Bosnia has announced its candidacy.

[1](#)2. (C) DCM delivered ref A demarche on May 10 to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MoFAT) Bilateral Affairs Director Pg Alihashim in parallel with UK and French demarches that same morning. We followed up on May 14 with MoFAT UN Affairs Assistant Director Florence Chong to urge an abstention on Belarus's candidacy. Chong responded that the Brunei UN mission had reported that the East Europe group had endorsed Belarus and Slovenia and Brunei traditionally supported recommendations by regional blocks. DCM countered that Belarus was a special case requiring extra scrutiny. Chong said she would relay U.S. concerns up her chain of command and seek updates from the Brunei Mission in New York.

[1](#)3. (C) In a second follow up call May 17, Chong reported that the Foreign Minister, Prince Muhamed, who is currently in Pakistan for the OIC meeting with the MoFAT Director for International Organizations, had already signed off on Brunei's position. However, she said that Brunei was aware of Bosnia declaring its candidacy for a UNHCR seat. Chong implied by this that Brunei's UN Mission would vote in support of Belarus at least in the first round, but may have some flexibility in its instructions in subsequent rounds. DCM urged Chong to follow the vote closely and look for the opportunity to update Brunei's position in subsequent rounds of voting. Chong said she would relay the U.S. view to her Director in Pakistan.

SKODON